

# Global Reach

## Destination Missoula teams up with Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre

Grounded in the understanding that art is the universal language, Destination Missoula and the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre (RMBT) have forged a unique partnership to combine performing arts and tourism on an international level. Destination Missoula has signed on as the title sponsor for RMBT until January 2016.

“This is a unique opportunity for Missoula to touch and inform an important international market that we would not ordinarily have the funding to reach,” says Director Barbara Neilan.

The Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre just returned from its international tour with performances throughout Italy, France, Germany, Norway, Poland and Austria.

In Austria, they performed with the Salzburg Ballet in gala performances of “Swan Lake,” celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Salzburg International Ballet Academy summer program, under the leadership of famed artistic director Peter Breuer. The company also performed on opening night of the Festspiele, Salzburg’s world-famous music



Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre brought Montana-themed dance to Salzburg, Austria, this summer.

festival, and throughout the event.

Additionally, RMBT was recently awarded a U.S. State Department grant to return to China this fall. During its third visit to China, the troupe will make an extended tour of the Guangxi Province – Montana’s sister state.

Neilan noted that the troupe has represented Montana throughout Europe, South America and China since 2002. “Now is the perfect time to showcase Missoula as the home of the

Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre,” she added.

“We are proud to be the ‘face’ of Missoula around the globe,” says Charlene Campbell Carey, RMBT’s artistic director and choreographer.

Neilan also pointed out that the international market is an increasingly vital component of tourism, and China is projected to become the largest emerging travel sector for years to come. “With our natural ties through The University of Montana and Ambassador Baucus, we are excited to be one of the first destination marketing organizations in the country to reach into this market in such an exceptional way,” she said.

For Campbell, RMBT’s original contemporary ballets about the West offer a natural vehicle to entice visitors. “Our Montana ballets and cultural programming will be focused on inspiring our audiences with information on what makes our beautiful city and surrounding five valleys a distinctive, not-to-be-missed travel destination,” she says.

For more information, visit [www.rmbt.org](http://www.rmbt.org).



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## Symposium explores “Sculpture in the Wild”

As Montana’s logging and mining industries declined during the last two decades, the small mountain town of Lincoln found itself languishing in the economic doldrums. An unlikely project to bring internationally renowned artists to town for a sculpture symposium – and the establishment of a sculpture park – may move the town’s fortunes in a new direction.

The project, Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild International Sculpture Symposium, is slated for Sept. 15-Oct. 4. The project was born in April 2013 while Ireland’s top silversmith Kevin O’Dwyer was visiting Lincoln to collaborate with Rick Dunkerley, an award-winning master bladesmith who specializes in Damascus steel.

The pair first met at the Pratt Fine Art Center in Seattle in 2010, when O’Dwyer, then artist-in-residence, took a bladesmith master class from Dunkerley. O’Dwyer, who in 2002 spearheaded the development of Sculpture in the Parklands at Lough Boora Parklands in Ireland, saw parallels between the Irish midlands and Lincoln. As in the midlands, he saw an area at an economic and cultural crossroads, slowly losing its identity to forces beyond its control.

Dunkerley, a 20-plus year resident of Lincoln, was initially skeptical when O’Dwyer broached the idea, but eventually realized bringing some of the world’s top sculptors to create site-specific, monumental abstract works that honor the industrial and cultural heritage of the Blackfoot Valley could reinvigorate the town. In addition to economic



“60 Degrees” by Kevin O’Dwyer, artistic director of Sculpture in the Wild.

benefits, he sees it as a catalyst, creating a future for Lincoln as an artistic and cultural center in the state.

Dunkerley said community support is vital to making such a project come to life. “That was critical to what they accomplished in Ireland,” he explained. Artists gave lectures and were artists-in-residence at local schools. “They got the community totally involved in it so they felt some ownership in it.”

Since last spring the symposium has developed the artistic direction, infrastructure and political support. Dunkerley, who heads the effort as project director, has slowly built support for the idea within the community.

Locally the Lincoln Council for the Arts, Lincoln Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Upper Blackfoot Valley Community Council, The U.S. Forest Service the Lincoln School Board and the Lewis and Clark County Commissioners have all embraced the sculp-

ture symposium as a unique opportunity to revitalize the area by creating new economic, educational and cultural opportunities.

O’Dwyer, the projects’ artistic director, brings his connections with the international art world to the table and has built interest for the project with several world-renowned sculptors from Finland, Denmark, Ireland, the U.S. and England. He has been as instrumental in helping the Sculpture in the Wild steering committee develop its symposium strategy and fundraising efforts and will both curate and participate in September’s event.

A focus on education will play a major role in the future of the project. Artists will be invited to work in the sculpture park during spring and autumn residencies, which will provide a building block for delivering a strong arts education program for local schools, and schools and universities across the state.

The training of local artists to deliver the on-site education program will also provide needed economic support and foster their creative expression.

At the end of the International Sculpture Symposium, the Sculpture in the Wild sculpture park, planned for a 26-acre tract of land on the east edge of Lincoln, will be open to the public. Once established, it will be open throughout the year, providing artists, educators and the business community with cultural and economic opportunities

“The sculpture park will give us the opportunity to honor the history of the Blackfoot Valley,” Dunkerley said. “Having the eyes of world-renowned artists respond to the beauty and heritage of our home can make us all look differently at what we take for granted.”

For details, visit [sculptureinthewild.com](http://sculptureinthewild.com).

### The Art of Leadership: Easy access for webinars

If you miss one of the Montana Arts Council’s Leadership Institute webinars, the will be archived at [www.art.mt.gov/orgs/orgs\\_artsorgresources.asp](http://www.art.mt.gov/orgs/orgs_artsorgresources.asp).

You can now access:

- How Strong Is Your Social Net?
- Accessible Websites

• Employee or Independent Contractor?

• Socialize with Us! (an archived audio discussion about social media)

• Website the Key to Telling Our Story (Glacier Symphony and Chorale’s features and discussion)

## Windows on Whitefish unveils third mosaic

To date, more than 400 people have broken glass and ceramics together, and learned to piece and mortar those fragments into works of art in the Windows on Whitefish project, launched in 2012 by Stumptown Art Studio.

The first of the four windows depicting the seasons of Whitefish (spring) was unveiled on Sept. 21, 2012, followed by the second (summer) in 2013. The third window (fall) debuts in a ceremony on Thursday, Sept. 4, during Whitefish Gallery Nights.

Special guest Arlynn Fishbaugh, executive director of the Montana Arts Council, will preside over the unveiling at 5:15 p.m. at the corner of Second and Central, followed by a celebration at Stumptown Art Studio.

Also during this gallery evening is the opening reception from 6-9 p.m. for an exhibit by Deb Stika, artistic director of the WOW project, that also features some of the mosaic



A soaring eagle adorns the third Window on Whitefish mosaic.

artwork created by her students.

WOW is a public art project consisting of a series of large (6-by-9 foot) mosaic murals depicting the four seasons of the Whitefish Range and life in the Flathead Valley. The three-year project was initially funded by a start-up grant from the Montana Arts Council and continues with support from individual and business donations and grants.

An integral part of the project is to involve the community in actually creating the giant mosaics. People participate by taking a class in mosaic making, taught by Stika. After learning the many aspects of this art form, they are welcome to come back any time during the community sessions to work on the actual WOW windows.

This year offers the final opportunity for community members to become part of the project and create their own mosaic pieces while working on the fourth window.

WOW not only beautifies downtown Whitefish, it also serves as a public art project, and brings people together to create art. The murals are on permanent display on the corner of 2nd St. and Central Ave. on the wall of the Latitude 48 Restaurant building.

For more details, call 406-862-5929 or visit [www.stumptownartstudio.org](http://www.stumptownartstudio.org).